

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1505

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 1913

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE: WORKING CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS

REF: STATE 57247

1. WE RAISED THIS SUBJECT WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR DUBININ ON MARCH 18, MAKING CLEAR WE WERE SPEAKING FROM INSTRUCTIONS. AMBASSADOR SHERER HAD ALREADY BROACHED SUBJECT WITH SOVIET DELEGATION HEAD KOVALEV AT BILATERAL LUNCH MARCH 17, AND HAD STRESSED IMPORTANCE USG ATTACHES TO A GOOD CSCE TEXT ON THIS TOPIC. IN MARCH 18 CONVERSATION WITH DUBININ, WE NOTED INCREASED ATTENTION BEING GIVEN CSCE BY US PRESS. WE STRESSED THAT IT IS IN MOSCOW'S INTEREST TO ACCEPT A JOURNALISTS' TEXT WHICH THE WESTERN PRESS WILL CONSIDER A REASONABLE RESULT, AS THIS WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE PRESS ATTITUDES TOWARDS CSCE AS A WHOLE.

2. WE THEN TOLD DUBININ THAT WE MIGHT PROPOSE TO QUALIFY THE WORD "ARRANGEMENTS," AS IT APPLIES TO MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT VISAS, WITH THE NOTION OF RECIPROCITY. DUBININ SAID HE HAD NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE BUT WOULD HAVE TO SEE PRECISE LANGUAGE BEFORE COMMENTING FURTHER. WE TOLD DUBININ WE WOULD ATTEMPT TO WORK
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OUT AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA WITH OUR ALLIES AND WOULD

BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH HIM THEREAFTER.

3. WE ADDED THAT OUR INSTRUCTIONS ALSO CALLED FOR US TO SUPPORT INCLUSION OF APPROPRIATE REFERENCES TO "TECHNICAL STAFF" IN JOURNALISTS' PAPER. MOREOVER, WE SAID WASHINGTON HAD NOT REACTED FAVORABLY TO THE PARAGRAPH ON EXPULSION IN THE SWISS DRAFT, AND WE WANTED LANGUAGE MAKING CLEAR THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD NOT BE LIABLE TO EXPULSION FOR THE LEGITIMATE PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES. FINALLY, WE SAID THAT SWISS TEXT ON ACCESS TO SOURCES (WHICH IS LIMITED TO WIDENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOURNALISTS TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH

"OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS") SHOULD BE BROADENED TO COVER IN SOME FASHION CONTACTS WITH INDIVIDUALS AS WELL. COMMENT: WE RECOGNIZE THAT REFTEL INSTRUCTIONS DO NOT OBLIGE US TO PRESS LAST MENTIONED POINT. HOWEVER, OTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN TEXT, TO WHICH WASHINGTON ATTACHES GREATER IMPORTANCE, WILL BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN, AND WE THINK IT BEST TO KEEP THE LAST POINT ALIVE FOR THE TIME BEING, IF ONLY AS A THROW-AWAY ITEM FOR NEGOTIATING PURPOSES. END COMMENT.

4. IN RESPONSE, DUBININ SAID HIS AUTHORITIES WERE FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE AND THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THE JOURNALISTS' TEXT. HE RECOGNIZED ALSO THE SERIOUSNESS OF US INTEREST IN THIS MATTER. MOSCOW, HE SAID, HAD ALREADY GIVEN CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE JOURNALISTS' PAPER, AND HE URGED US TO EMPHASIZE TO WASHINGTON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCESSIONS THE SOVIETS HAD MADE, OR WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE IN DUE COURSE: MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT VISAS; RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT OF JOURNALISTS TO IMPORT TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT; RAPID TRANSMISSION OF JOURNALISTS' COMMUNICATIONS; AND WIDENING THE POSSIBILITIES OF DIRECT COMMUNICATION BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WITH OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS. THE LAST CONCESSION WOULD REQUIRE MODIFICATION OF EXISTING SOVIET LEGISLATION; HE REFERRED TO A SOVIET LAW OF 1947.
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5. ON SPECIFIC POINTS OF US INTEREST, DUBININ SAID THAT SOVIETS WOULD NOT GO FURTHER THAN THE SWISS LANGUAGE ON WIDENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTACTS WITH OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS; IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO INCLUDE ANY REFERENCE TO DIRECT CONTACTS WITH "OFFICIALS" OR WITH "PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS."

6. WITH RESPECT TO TECHNICAL STAFF, DUBININ DID NOT THINK HIS AUTHORITIES WOULD BE ABLE TO GO NEARLY AS FAR AS WE WOULD LIKE, EVEN IF THE TERM "TECHNICAL STAFF" WERE QUALIFIED BY REFERENCES TO SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF PERSONNEL AND BY REFERENCE TO "REASONABLE NUMBERS," OR SOMETHING SIMILAR. HOWEVER, SOVIETS MIGHT EVENTUALLY AGREE TO LANGUAGE ALLOWING MEDIA REPS TO BRING IN TECHNICAL STAFF WHO CANNOT BE HIRED LOCALLY. MOREOVER, WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO GRANT JOURNALISTS RIGHT TO IMPORT TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT WAS AT LEAST A SMALL STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF RELAXATION OF MOSCOW'S POSITION ON TECHNICAL STAFF.

7. WITH RESPECT TO EXPULSION, HE SAID THW SWISS FORMULA WAS ALREADY VERY DIFFICULT FOR MOSCOW. HE DOUBTED THAT SOVIETS WOULD GO EVEN ONE INCH BEYOND IT.

8. THERE WAS SOME POLITE SPARRING DURING THIS CONVERSATION ON THE SUBJECT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S DRAFT EUROPEAN CONVENTION RELATING TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. DUBININ ARGUED (CORRECTLY) THAT MANY OF ITS SPECIFIC PROVISIONS ARE MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THOSE IN PLAY HERE. MOSCOW, THEREFORE, KEPT ASKING WHY WESTERN GOVERNMENTS SHOULD EXPECT THEIR CORRESPONDENTS TO HAVE BROADER PRIVILEGES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION THAN THEY WERE THEMSELVES WILLING TO GRANT JOURNALISTS FROM OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. WE COUNTERED THAT THE DRAFT CONVENTION OPENS WITH A RINGING PREAMBULAR STATEMENT ON THE INTEREST OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES IN THE BROADEST INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION OF NEWS AND IDEAS -- CONCEPTS THE SOVIETS WOULD FIND DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT IN ANY CSCE TEXT. WE NOTED THAT THE CONTEXT AND ECONOMY OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE DRAFT, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE CSCE TEXT ON THE OTHER, WERE QUITE DIFFERENT; THEREFORE, IT IS NOT PERSUASIVE TO CITE SPECIFIC PASSAGES IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DRAFT AS AN ARGUMENT AGAINST MORE LIBERAL WORDING IN PARTS OF THE CSCE TEXT.
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